



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/6 (Prog. 11)
2 August 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-ninth session

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997

MAJOR PROGRAMME III. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Programme 11. Policy development and coordination

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.
2. Regulation 3.11 provides, *inter alia*, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.
3. The revised programme 11, Policy development and coordination, submitted below replaces existing programme 11, Overall issues and policies, including coordination of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/253 of 21 December 1990.
4. The proposed new text, namely, section A and subprogrammes 1 to 3 of section B, reflects changes in the content and orientation of the activities under major programme III, international cooperation for economic and social development, resulting from adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991, 46/235 of 13 April 1992 and 48/162 of 20 December 1993, as well as changes in the structure of the Secretariat resulting from its restructuring.

5. Subprogramme 5, Coordination of policies and action to combat world hunger, is renumbered accordingly. In this connection it should be noted that at its eighteenth ministerial session, held in June 1992 at Nairobi, WFC set in motion a process to review its future role and functioning within the wider context of the overall restructuring of the economic and social activities of the United Nations system. This process, which is still ongoing, effectively suspended the previously programmed activities of WFC pending the completion of the intergovernmental review. It also resulted in the replacement of programmed activities related to the nineteenth ministerial session, postponed from 1993, by new and additional outputs requested by member States of WFC, in accordance with the General Assembly directives aimed at facilitating intergovernmental consultations on the future of the Council.

6. More specifically, WFC, at its eighteenth session established an Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council, which met in New York on 14 and 15 September 1992 and submitted its report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The Ad Hoc Committee could not reach agreement on the Council's future role, with views ranging from its abolition to its strengthening, and including several proposals to integrate its mandate with another intergovernmental body, and referred the question to the Assembly. In its resolution 47/150 of 18 December 1992, the Assembly subsequently decided to address the issue at its resumed forty-seventh session in the context of the discussions on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and the ongoing restructuring of the Secretariat, and, in that context, invited WFC to continue its attempts to agree on appropriate measures to be taken and to communicate any agreed conclusions to it.

7. In response to that resolution, the Council initiated a consultative process, including meetings of the Rome representatives of the Bureau and the establishment of a Rome-based informal working group, which held several meetings from January to April 1993. The report of the working group, which was referred to all member States of the Council for comments and further proposals, was submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed forty-seventh session, in May 1993. The report concluded that Council members were agreed on a set of principles to guide the United Nations response to global food and hunger problems, but disagreements continued to exist concerning the most effective institutional response to those principles.

8. It should also be noted that in the context of the restructuring of the Secretariat, the secretariat of WFC was dissolved in 1993 and its functions of providing support to coordination in the food area were entrusted to the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

9. In view of the above developments, the coordination of policies and action to combat world hunger will be dealt with in the context of the next medium-term plan for the period 1998-2003, after the intergovernmental consultations on the future of WFC are completed.

10. The following text replaces paragraphs 11.1 to 11.33 of A/47/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

/...

"PROGRAMME 11. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

"A. Programme

"1. General orientation

"11.1 The orientation and objectives of the present programme derive from resolutions 45/264, 46/235 and 48/162, whereby the General Assembly adopted the measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, other relevant resolutions on the issues of the international economic cooperation, as well as from relevant aspects of the mandate of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the Organization and his responsibilities as the Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

"11.2 Since 1990, the General Assembly has taken a number of important decisions aimed at meeting the new challenges that face the international community in the economic, social and environmental fields in the 1990s and beyond. These include the legislative mandates stemming from the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic cooperation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

"11.3 The interrelated nature of United Nations mandates in these broad fields and the unprecedented scope of the new activities to be carried out by the Organization and the United Nations system as a whole require more harmonious and effective approaches towards policy development and coordination of substantive support for central intergovernmental bodies and negotiating processes with a view to broadening the base and enhancing the quality of such support by engaging all relevant parts of the economic and social sectors of the Organization. The programme aims to contribute to the promotion of effective coordination of the ongoing and envisaged activities in order to ensure that they are carried out in a coherent and focused manner, both at the central policy-making and at the executive levels.

"11.4 The principal focus of work under this programme is to provide support for central coordinating and policy-making functions, vested in the Economic and Social Council, as well as Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. The policy development and coordination functions will concentrate on promoting an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental aspects of development, including the elaboration of perspectives and policy recommendations that will create the conditions for equitable and participatory development. Furthermore, the programme will aim at developing and promoting a coordinated approach to key policy issues such as growth and adjustment, poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and the

integration into the development process of all social and population groups, including those with special needs.

"11.5 In that context, the objective of the programme at the executive level is to support the Secretary-General in promoting the effective translation of intergovernmental directives in those areas into coordinated work programmes of the United Nations and at the level of the system as a whole.

"11.6 More specifically, the objectives of the programme include keeping abreast of developments, taking particular account of the developing needs of the developing countries and bringing new, emerging and major policy issues to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes.

"11.7 Furthermore, the programme covers objectives related to promotion, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary machinery, of greater cooperation and collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system and more effective coordination, complementarity and effective use of resources throughout the system, as well as the promotion of enhanced global management and coordination of food security and hunger alleviation issues and programmes within the United Nations system.

"2. Overall strategy

"11.8 The attainment of these objectives within the medium-term plan will entail:

"(a) Developing policy approaches, concepts, frameworks and courses of action for assisting intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies in ensuring the effective implementation of activities in the economic and social fields, as well as in promoting interorganizational collaboration and cooperation in areas of common concern within the United Nations system, particularly through studies and reports prepared for and submitted to intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies;

"(b) Providing overall orientation and coordinating substantive support for the preparation of inputs to the Economic and Social Council and, in particular, its high-level and coordination segments;

"(c) Promoting initiatives, policy options and alternative courses of action that would facilitate progress in the international dialogue and consensus-building on economic and social issues;

"(d) Assisting intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies by developing system-wide approaches and programmes for the coordinated implementation of policy directives and legislative mandates, particularly through preparation of studies, reports and system-wide medium-term plans in close cooperation and consultation with organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system;

"(e) Providing substantive support to intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies and meetings, such as the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its Organizational Committee and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, as well as the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, cooperation and joint planning issues in the economic and social fields;

"(f) Providing guidance on the translation of intergovernmental directives into substantive policies and programmes;

"(g) Providing support for the coordinated implementation of major United Nations declarations, strategies, programmes of action and global events, as well as the preparation of relevant policy reports of the Secretary-General;

"(h) Carrying out related activities with respect to the triennial policy review of operational activities and providing substantive servicing to the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council;

"(i) Strengthening coordination of the activities of the United Nations system to achieve United Nations objectives in the field of hunger and malnutrition;

"(j) Providing substantive support to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in matters relating to the restructuring of the United Nations intergovernmental machinery in the economic, social and related fields.

"11.9 Given the evolving nature of the Organization's work in the field of policy development and coordination, it is not possible to identify in advance the full range of activities to be performed; rather, a capacity to adjust the work programme in response to unforeseen developments and new requirements emanating from ongoing intergovernmental processes is essential.

"3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

"11.10 The programme on policy development and coordination will consist of the following subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Overall policy development and coordination of United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors

Subprogramme 2. System-wide programming and inter-agency coordination

Subprogramme 3. Operational activities for development

Subprogramme 4. Coordination of policies and action to combat world hunger

"11.11 The programme will be implemented by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in cooperation with other departments and offices of the Secretariat, as appropriate.

"11.12 There is no priority designation among the subprogrammes.

"B. Subprogrammes

"SUBPROGRAMME 1. OVERALL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS

"(a) Objectives

"11.13 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 45/177, 45/264, 46/235, 47/152, 47/181, 48/162, 48/165 and 48/166; and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1988/77, 1989/114 and 1990/69 and decision 1990/205.

"11.14 The objectives of subprogramme 1 are: (a) to provide support for the central coordinating and policy-making functions vested in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly; (b) to contribute to the promotion of policy coordination and development within the United Nations, on the basis of integrated, multisectoral and people-centred approaches to development problems; (c) to promote a coherent and integrated approach to intersectoral issues by assisting the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in undertaking analysis of major policy themes/issues leading to enhanced complementarities in programme design; (d) to provide substantive support to the high-level coordination and, as required, operational activity segments of the Council; (e) to coordinate the provision of other substantive support to the Council as may be required and, as appropriate, to its subsidiary bodies; (f) to coordinate the provision of substantive support, as may be required, in matters relating to the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social fields; and (g) to contribute to the elaboration of policy reports of the Secretary-General and assist him, along with other organizational entities, in ensuring policy coherence and coordination in the economic and social field.

"(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

"11.15 The reorganization of the economic, social and environmental sectors of work within the United Nations reflects the recognition of the mutually reinforcing relationship between economic growth and human welfare. The activities of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development will thus focus on promoting an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental aspects of development, including

/...

the elaboration of perspectives that will provide for sustainable, equitable and participatory development.

"11.16 The activities will also concentrate on the development of integrated policies aimed at supporting the coordinating and policy-making role of the central intergovernmental bodies. The activities will include carrying out analytical work in consultation with other organizational units of the Secretariat as well as with agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as and when required, aimed at identifying potential cross-sectoral issues that call for an integrated approach and a coordinated policy response by intergovernmental bodies, and contributing to the elaboration and coordination of relevant policy reports of the Secretary-General.

"11.17 In this regard assistance will be provided to the Economic and Social Council in identifying major themes for its high-level and coordination segments as appropriate. Furthermore, decisions by the Council and other intergovernmental bodies requiring action by the United Nations system will be followed up and properly coordinated by means of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. In addition, the Council will be kept abreast of the actions and responses by the Administrative Committee both directly and through its subsidiary bodies, in particular, the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

"SUBPROGRAMME 2. SYSTEM-WIDE PROGRAMMING AND INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

"(a) Objectives

"11.18 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 32/197, annex, 37/173, 38/149, 39/229, 43/15, 44/170, 44/194, 44/213, 44/226, 44/231, 45/187, 45/189, 45/264, 46/157, 46/158, 46/203, 46/253 and 47/214; and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1296 (XLIV), 1986/72, 1988/59, 1988/61, 1988/77, 1989/108 and 1989/114, and decisions 1989/110, 1990/85, 1990/86, 1990/88, 1991/65 and 1991/66.

"11.19 The objectives of subprogramme 2 are (a) to establish and develop procedures for achieving through interorganizational cooperation and coordination of concerted implementation by the United Nations of policy guidelines, directives and priorities emanating from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and for integrating into a coherent whole the relevant expertise and inputs of the organizations of the United Nations system; (b) to facilitate the functioning of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination by providing, or coordinating, as appropriate, substantive and technical support to the Committee and to relevant elements of its subsidiary machinery, as well as of the Committee on Programme and Coordination and of the Joint Meetings of the two Committees in respect of responsibilities for interorganizational cooperation and coordination; (c) to develop and promote within the United Nations system coordinated responses to key and emerging areas of international concern with the aim of harmonizing system-wide policies and programmes and enhancing their coherence, efficiency and impact; (d) to develop and promote arrangements and instruments for collaborative and

/...

joint actions by the organizations of the system on intersectoral issues, including through acting as the United Nations focal point for specific system-wide actions in the economic, social and environmental fields; (e) to formulate and develop system-wide plans of action and medium-term plans; (f) to promote the coordinated implementation of the major United Nations declarations and strategies by the United Nations system; (g) to promote collaborative action by the United Nations system in the intersectoral area of consumer protection and to assist Member States, on request, in implementing the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection; and (h) to assist the Economic and Social Council in its consultative relationship with non-governmental organizations in implementing its resolutions and decisions and those of the General Assembly.

"(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

"11.20 Because of the decentralized nature of the United Nations system, broad policy goals are pursued under the aegis of a complex structure of mandates emanating from a variety of intergovernmental bodies. Clearly articulated goals and strategies for the system are required in many fields and information on proposed plans and programmes needs to be exchanged in order to achieve a more integrated and harmonized approach in specific areas of work. The range and complexity of subjects considered by the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council, the Committee on Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination demand substantive support both in terms of the information required and of the effective implementation of agreed lines of action. To that end, reports on the activities of the United Nations system on various issues will continue to be submitted to the General Assembly, the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and to the Committee on Programme and Coordination and Joint Meetings with the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Inter-agency consultations will be needed to prepare for consideration of major issues of international concern by the Administrative Committee on Coordination and to follow up its decisions. The process of prior consultation will continue to be reviewed through the machinery of the Administrative Committee with a view to improving its effectiveness as an instrument for the harmonization of policies and to providing substantive servicing of and participation in the meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies on issues within the programmes under the responsibility of the Department. Interorganizational cooperation will also be provided for activities relating to the commemoration of international anniversaries, years and decades designated by the General Assembly.

"11.21 The Department will allocate as necessary the appropriate capabilities, resources and relevant expertise to assist in undertaking analytical studies on specific economic, social and environmental issues of system-wide scope with a view to promoting an integrated approach. Close attention will continue to be given to cooperation with relevant organizations of the United Nations system in elaborating and developing the system-wide plan for women and development for the year 2000, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as

/...

well as future system-wide action plan that may be decided at the intergovernmental level.

"11.22 During the period of the plan, database and focal point responsibilities will be undertaken for the United Nations system and cooperation with OECD will continue to update and maintain the macrothesaurus for information processing in the field of economic and social development as a cooperative activity of international and regional organizations. Triennial policy reviews will be held in collaboration with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system with a view to maintaining up-to-date and comprehensive information on products harmful to health and environment for the use of Governments and consumers.

"11.23 With respect to the cross-sectoral area of consumer protection, work will continue in assisting Governments, at their request, in implementing the United Nations Guidelines as a framework for elaborating and strengthening consumer protection policies and legislation, as well as means for encouraging international cooperation in this field. These activities will comprise regional seminars, advisory services and thematic workshops. The need for consumer guidelines in specific sectors, such as sustainable consumption, will be examined in this context. Action will be further developed on the basis of recommendations of intergovernmental bodies.

"11.24 Another area of activity relates to assisting non-governmental organizations. The General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies are continuously addressing to non-governmental organizations an increasing number of requests in a wide variety of fields. There is a need to assist those non-governmental organizations in responding to requests from intergovernmental bodies, coordinating their activities in order to avoid duplication and to ensure complementarity. There is also an increased demand on the part of Member States for information and assistance in approaching non-governmental organizations. To those ends, the subprogramme will serve increasingly as a focal point for liaison with the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations by providing, inter alia, guidance and orientation to the various substantive non-governmental organizations' committees and coordinating the activities of those committees through appropriate mechanisms, by continuing to act as the substantive secretariat of the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council and by increasing the attention to strengthening consultations and contacts with the non-governmental organizations through annual and ad hoc meetings between Member States and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations. Finally, the subprogramme will also aim at assisting non-governmental organizations in developing collaborative relations with the Secretariat with a view to contributing to the implementation of the respective programmes.

"SUBPROGRAMME 3. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

"(a) Objectives

"11.25 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 35/81, 41/171, 42/196, 43/199, 44/211, 47/199, 48/162 and 48/209 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/7.

"11.26 The overall objectives of subprogramme 3 will be the provision of support to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with regard to the formulation and execution of recommendations aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness, coherence and coordination of operational activities, particularly those financed on a grant basis in support of development efforts at the country level, and achieving greater coherence and coordination at the country level and improved integration with national efforts, through such approaches as country strategy notes, a programme approach and national execution.

"11.27 In that context, the General Assembly has called for efforts in the following areas:

"(a) To achieve a substantial increase in resources for operational activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;

"(b) To achieve overall improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in delivering its development assistance;

"(c) To ensure the effective integration of assistance provided by the United Nations system into the development process of countries, with enhanced accountability, including through the formulation of country strategy notes by interested Governments;

"(d) To promote common standards to the application of the programme approach by the United Nations system, including an effective methodology for evaluation;

"(e) To ensure that national execution becomes the standard norm for programmes and projects supported by the United Nations system;

"(f) To direct the specific attention of the United Nations system to assisting recipient countries in building and enhancing their capacity in undertaking national execution;

"(g) To achieve greater decentralization in the context of enhanced accountability;

"(h) To simplify and harmonize the rules and procedures guiding the operational activities of the United Nations system;

"(i) To strengthen the functioning of the resident coordinator system;

/...

"(j) To establish and strengthen field-level committees for providing guidance and advice on proposed programmes of funding agencies and reviewing the agency sector strategies and evaluations, in consultation with the host Government where appropriate;

"(k) To develop common innovative and integrated system-wide training programmes, including those for national staff;

"(l) To ensure that operational activities for development in new recipient countries are undertaken on the basis of an integrated, unified, cost-effective and innovative approach to development cooperation.

"11.28 In contributing to the advancement of these objectives, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development will cooperate closely with UNDP and consult with operational programmes of the United Nations and relevant organizations of the system, including through the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The preparation of assessments and reports for the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council will receive particular attention.

"(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

"11.29 To achieve these objectives, the Department will seek:

"(a) To develop, in consultation with UNDP and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, a three-year plan of action in response to the specific requests contained in General Assembly resolution 47/199 for submission to the Economic and Social Council. Other intergovernmental bodies will be kept abreast of the development and implementation of the plan of action;

"(b) To monitor the implementation of the activities under resolution 47/199, develop relevant recommendations for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and assist, in that context, in the formulation of specific initiatives, including in relation to the introduction of country strategy notes, strengthening the resident coordinator system, achieving system-wide agreement on the programme approach and national execution, achieving greater decentralization and simplifying and harmonizing the procedures of the operational activities of the United Nations system;

"(c) To identify new operational requirements of developing countries and to elaborate in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system, appropriate modalities for responding to those requirements."
